

THE ULTIMATE DRAGON WARRIORS ZINE

# CASKET OF FAYS

ISSUE THIRTEEN



  
BROCKFRONT  
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# **HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO**

*Jonathan Hicks*

The small town of Kempurg is protected by Sir Gildfyord of the Starry Veil who, when summoned, rides down from his estate in his shining armour and on his best steed, ready to rid the land of whatever terrors that are threatening it.

He rides into the local Fogstone Wood to face the threat and always emerges victorious, covered in the blood of his enemy and with a trophy or two, usually in the form of a broken sword or a piece of bloodied armour from a hobgoblin or an orc. To thank him, the townsfolk hold a feast in his honour and shower him with gifts and money, and place the trophies on the mantelpiece over the great fire in Warren's Inn, the only drinking establishment in the town, and people come from far and wide to wonder at the treasures and hear the tales.

## **The Players**

When the PCs arrive in Kempurg, the whole town is abuzz; Sir Gildfyord received word that orcs have been seen in Fogstone Wood and he rode in with his sword drawn and his visor down. He is expected back by sundown after he has dealt with the devils!

As usual, the locals have all travelled into town to see the return of the knight, and they have filled the market square and Warren's Inn. The mood is one of excitement and expectation, and wagers are being set to see how many foes he will slay this time. The atmosphere is almost festival-like, with children running around with wooden swords and buckets on their heads and market traders happy to shout about their reduced prices to celebrate another impending victory against the darkness!

While Sir Gildfyord is in the wood, all prices from all vendors and shops are reduced by 20 percent, and will only be put back to full price once the knight has returned.

## **About The Town**

The player characters will have time to learn more of the locals and the knight who protects them. They may learn the following details:

Sir Gildfyord? He arrived at the Old Berry Keep a year previous after returning from foreign wars and has taken over from the late Lord Berry, who died of old age the previous winter. With no other children, Lord Berry left the estate to Gildfyord, his nephew once removed.

Nobody is allowed in the Fogstone Wood; it's always been cursed and it's filled up with monsters and devils this last year, especially after the old Lord Berry passed away. It's a good thing Sir Gildfyord arrived when he did!

Sir Gildfyord has a woodsman who goes into the wood, and he's the only one who is allowed to. It's he who alerts his lordship to the dangers!

No... nobody has actually seen the devils Sir Gildfyord defeats, but he always comes back with trophies from his vanquished foes! They're in Warren's Inn, above the fire!

## **Warren's Inn**

The only drinking establishment in the town is Warren's Inn, and it sits at the very centre of the town surrounded by its own high wall, so it appears as a small castle. It is a two-storied building with a large stable and livery; Kempurg is along a popular trader's route, which has become much busier

since Sir Gildfyord began his adventures in the wood. At this time, it is full, although it is the only service in the town that hasn't reduced the prices and the innkeeper, Warren of Glissom, is making a killing.

The main common room has a huge fireplace on the far wall, and trophies adorn the mantelpiece and the wall itself. Lots of daggers, swords, helmets, pieces of armour, rent shields and scraps of leather and chain-mail have been nailed to the wooden beams, and a large crowd of paying customers is gathered to marvel at them.

These are Sir Gildfyord's trophies that he has brought back from his various battles in Fogstone Wood; a helmet from a hobgoblin chief, gauntlets from an orc captain, and a shield from a goblin warlord. All fell to this blade and are displayed here, in triumph, to remind the people of Kempur that they are safe under his protection!

Any player character making a successful Intelligence roll will see almost straight away that the items are incredibly old, some rusted almost beyond use, and although orcs and goblins wear bedraggled and damaged armour and wield chipped and damaged weapons, all of this is almost unusable. They will also notice a small emblem on a helmet; a claw with a bat's wing, the white paint almost completely faded. Another Intelligence test will tell them that this is the mark of the Winged Talon, a tribe of orcs that were wiped out almost fifty years ago when the lands were in upheaval.

## **Waiting For The Hero**

The sun dips below the horizon and night starts to cover the sky. There is still no sign of Sir Gildfyord and, as the sky darkens and the moon rises, the crowds start to drift away. There is some concern for the knight as he is usually back by sundown. The innkeeper Warren is especially concerned,

and he even approaches the PCs to see if they can help as they are obviously adventurers of some sort.

Then a shout goes up – Sir Gildfyord’s horse has returned! It is riderless and wounded, with an ugly arrow of crude make sticking from its saddle. The townsfolk are aghast! Where is their protector?

They decide to look for someone to go and find him and they will pay handsomely; the market traders and Warren pool their resources and offer 250 silver florins to whoever goes into Fogstone Wood to bring back Sir Gildfyord – they will even go up to 400 if they are haggled with.

## **Fogstone Wood**

The wood has earned its nickname; a thin, permanent fog permeates everything and the ground is rough with rocks and stones, as if great boulders have been smashed apart and their jagged remnants scattered in the trees. In fact, there’s evidence of shaped stone, so there’s a possibility that some of the rocks were once part of walls or buildings.

As the players head deeper into the woods, they come across bodies long dead, skeletons picked clean by nature, and evidence of the weapons they bore and the armour they wore buried under years of foliage and dirt. They are exactly the same as the items above the fire in Warren’s Inn, some even have the faded Winged Talon mark.

As they go deeper, the trees get thicker and the bodies more plentiful, not just of the orcs but of humans too, their bodies also under the top layer of dirt. Was a great battle once fought here? There are dozens of remains scattered across a wide area. Some of them have coins that might be of some value still; if they search, the party can roll once for a Moderate treasure in the Treasure Types table on page 131 of the rulebook.

As the players move forward they see a dim light in the fog, and they can smell what seems to be cooking meat. It smells like pork and it is thick in the air.

## **The Orcs**

The forest thins slightly and a small glade comes into view. A large fire is burning and, over the fire cooking, is the unfortunate corpse of a human; this is Sir Gildfyord's woodsman, and his belongings have been piled up to one side.

Around the fire are sat five orcs: four soldiers and one war-master, his armour thicker and his sword bigger. They are all sitting around the fire talking in their own guttural language, picking at scabs, and scratching at boils. One is standing by the fire turning their meal.

On the far side of the glade from where the players are approaching is Sir Gildfyord, injured but alive. His armour has been stripped off and is right now acting as a seat for the war-master, so he is in nothing but his thin gambeson, shivering in the cold. He is staring at the turning corpse in sheer terror. Then the war-master grunts, the orc turning the body takes the human meal off the fire, picks up another long branch and, with another orc, starts walking toward the unfortunate knight. The players have to act!

### **Orc**

Rank-equivalent: 1st

ATTACK 12

DEFENCE 5

MAGICAL DEFENCE 3

EVASION 3

Health Points 13

Shortsword (d8, 3), one orc has a bow (d6, 4)

Armour Factor 2

STEALTH 12

PERCEPTION 4 (darksight)

Movement 10m (20m)



## Orc War-Master

Rank-equivalent: 3rd

ATTACK 16

DEFENCE 8

MAGICAL DEFENCE 5

EVASION 5

Health Points 15

Greatsword (d10, 5)

Armour Factor 4

STEALTH 14

PERCEPTION 6 (darksight)

Movement 10m (20m)



## Sir Gildfyord

Sir Gildfyord is an average 6th-rank Knight<sup>1</sup>.

If Sir Gildfyord is rescued, he will be incredibly appreciative and offer a reward of 75 gold to the group, but if he is questioned about the curious

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<sup>1</sup> Stats for average Knights are on p.119 of the Dragon Warriors rulebook.

nature of his exploits and the trophies in Warren's Inn, the ordeal will overcome him and he will come clean; the entire last year and his exploits have been a lie.

He came across this field of death during a tour of the lands he had inherited from his late relative Lord Berry. Without realising that Fogstone Wood was avoided by everyone in Kempurg at all costs due to folk tales and rumours of ghosts, he entered the wood and found a rusting helmet.



Intrigued, he took it back to Warren's Inn to ask about it and made a joke about defeating its owner in combat. The helmet was immediately bought by a merchant, caught up in the fantasy that this was a trophy of a defeated monster. Both Sir Gildfyord and Warren had a flash of inspiration and the plan was born; every few weeks, Sir Gildfyord would be summoned to the wood, and after a time, he would return with trophies – the things he found in the field of corpses – for the locals to ogle over and for rich people to buy as souvenirs. The market grew, Warren's profits soared, and Sir Gildfyord made gold.

And why did they do all of this? Well, the late Lord Berry was well-liked, but the estate was bankrupt. Every coin Lord Berry owned had been taken in taxes for the wars overseas or donated to the Church as a guarantee for passage to the afterlife. Sir Gildfyord had come to the estate and the town expecting a title and riches, and he found nothing but empty coffers and debt. He had to do something both to fill his vaults to maintain the estate and the town and to build a reputation, something that he had come back from the wars with very little of. Short of selling his title and the lands that came with it, possibly upheaving dozens of families and destroying trade, he felt there was little more he could do.

As the only other man in on the scheme, the woodsman would summon Sir Gildfyord alerting him to a new ‘danger’ in the woods, but this time the ‘call’ came early. When he arrived, the knight realised too late that the summons was a true one. Poor Ogilvy the woodsman was already dead when Sir Gildfyord arrived and the orcs ambushed him. He managed to kill two of them – he may be dishonest but he’s not a coward – but they overpowered him. Now he has to go back to the town, and he doesn’t know what to do.

## **Back To Kempurg**

Now that the players know the truth, what will they do with this information?

If they take Sir Gildfyord back and tell the townsfolk the truth, the people will be aghast, disgusted and more than a little embarrassed. Sir Gildfyord will be shunned, Warren will be driven out of business, and the mayor of the town will petition the king with the truth. Sir Gildfyord’s reputation will lie in tatters. Kempurg, in the long run, will suffer and trade will fall away. Kempurg will become just another run-down miserable town.

If they keep the secret, Sir Gildfyord will return in triumph and the players will be held up as heroes. The lie will continue but the town will thrive, and Sir Gildfyord will make sure the players are taken care of, with twenty percent discounts in all the stores and free board in his keep should they ever come this way.

If they try to blackmail or threaten Sir Gildfyord in any way regarding the deceit then he will initially have no choice but to acquiesce to their demands, but once they are gone he will realise that the PCs might be a threat to the future of the town and arrange for assassins to take care of the problem. The players had better watch their backs from here on out!

# FAQs FOR DRAGON WARRIORS (PART 5)

*Dave Morris (compiled by Brock)*

First published by Dave Morris, and reprinted here with his kind permission, are questions asked about the Dragon Warriors game along with his replies. There are a lot of them. This completes the FAQ, with previous parts being published in Casket of Fays issues 9 – 12.

(47) When a Sorcerer kills a load of enemies with *Hecatomb*, does he get the experience points for doing so (thus offsetting the 1d100 XP he loses by casting the spell)? It doesn't seem like you would learn all that much from the experience.

Yes, he does get the experience points – maybe he learned that this is something he'd prefer not to do again. This brain-blasting spell is not one most Sorcerers would care to cast more than once in a blue moon, and so each casting is in itself a learning experience.

(48) Can a *Phantasm* be created in the form of a giant eagle, large enough to carry the Sorcerer aloft?

Yes.

(49) Does cheaper poison than that made by a Sorcerer exist? 1200 florins (plus labour) seems like a lot for a dose of poison if you're the town ratcatcher and need to take care of an infestation.

Sure – Assassin's Lotion just represents one example. Sorcerers have this strange need to make everything so complicated. The poison created by Sorcerers also has a shelf-life measured in centuries.

(50) Is *Steel Claw* considered to be an enchanted weapon (for the purposes of attacking spectres, etc.)?

Yes.

(51) Can *Intangibility* be used to drop through the ground, for instance into an underground lair or whatever? How does the Mystic avoid this happening normally anyway?

Yes, it can be used in that way. The Mystic is able to control his movement to ensure that he doesn't fall to places he doesn't want to. He can't defy the laws of gravity and use it to fly, though.

(52) Can a Mystic cast spells while he's away from his body during a *Trance*?

No. While using the *Trance*, his Ka can't interact with others. This includes casting spells.

(53) Is there a limit to how many potions a Sorcerer can brew at once, provided his lab is big enough? The rules say up to ten can be on the brew at once "in a normal sized laboratory", so presumably a large laboratory could have more.

Yes, but each doubling of size of the laboratory doubles the price, obviously.



# THE WAYFARER'S CANTRIPS

Chris Jolliffe

*The names of Elias and Getrude Sauvage are all but unknown in the thaumaturgical libraries of the world, which is something of a shame. This wizardly couple spent a great deal of their lives in the wilderness, in the process formulating a series of small but welcome enchantments that would gladden the heart of many a weary adventurer. These little spells they gathered in a notebook they called “The Wayfarer’s Cantrips” along with anecdotes and musings of their travels, and when they at last decided to settle down, they passed this little book to their son, Tobias. Tobias was a monk, and while the practice of magic was abhorrent to him, he was charmed by the commentaries of his parents therein and so took the time to prepare and properly bind the notes – copying the strange notations proved impossible. This slim volume then resided in his cell until discovered by the Prior, who commanded that the insidious journal was disposed of. Tobias dutifully passed it to a travelling tinker, who sold it along the road somewhere in Northern Albion.*

*If this unassuming little book with its whimsically-carved green leather cover were to be found, the enlightened reader could find a number of useful spells therein....*

The ‘Wayfarer’s Cantrips’ is written in educated Bacchile and Arcane, and the spells therein are usable by Sorcerers and Warlocks. Learning one of these spells requires a month of study per spell level - a few hours a day would suffice – followed by a successful Intelligence roll of (3d6 + twice spell level). If failed, the process must be repeated.

Although Elementalists cannot read the script, if the principles and effects are explained to them in sufficient detail by one proficient in casting the

spells then they too can potentially learn them (although it would take twice as long and increase the required Intelligence roll by 1).

It is worth noting that none of these spells are instantaneous; they will take several minutes of calm preparation to craft, set, and empower. These spells can be combined. Unless specifically stated, they can only be used on stationary campsites.

The book is not easily copied, and would require a Sorcerer of at least 6th Rank spending a year on the task and spending 4d100 florins on experimental materials.

### **Comforting Hearth**

Level	1/2/3
Casting range	1m
Effective range	3m
Casting time	5 minutes/15 minutes/1 hour
Duration	3 hours/6 hours/12 hours



This spell is cast upon a good-sized campfire which responds with flickers of strange colours. The effect of *Comforting Hearth* is to promote well-being, comfort, and good humour; for those sat close by the fire, all but the most sodden of clothes will dry and caked mud can then be shaken off. The temperature will settle to a pleasing level in all but the most extreme of weather, softening the ambient temperature by as much as 10 degrees Celsius (roughly 20 degrees Fahrenheit).

Frayed tempers are assuaged and a sense of contentment settles, calming nerves and ending (or at least mitigating) arguments and ill humour. This can have the alarming effect of drawing nearby wild animals to the fire; it is not overly unusual for campers to find themselves joined by foxes,

rabbits, or even a wolf or two, contentedly dozing by the fire. Such visitors are not actual allies and are best left alone, leaving if annoyed or alarmed.

Gertrude introduced a note of whimsy; those sitting around the fire possessed of a modicum of ability (Psychic Talent 9 or more) can create shapes in the flames for entertainment – capering goblins, dancers, perhaps the remembered face of a loved one, and actual magicians of any profession can make these visible to others.

Comforting Hearth can be cast at 1st, 2nd or 3rd level, increasing the time that the effect will last. Note that while it can be cast at a level lower than it has been learned, it cannot be cast higher.

The spell requires that the fire is well fed, increasing fuel consumption by 25%.

### **Watchful Flame**

Level	1/2/3
Casting range	1m
Effective range	Up to half a mile
Casting time	5 minutes/15 minutes/1 hour
Duration	3 hours/6 hours/12 hours

Watchful Flame is cast upon flames, customarily a campfire or circle of long-burning candles, and is set to a given distance. If any person or being entering the prescribed range of the spell sees the fire (judged as having line of sight) the flames will billow and flare blue, crackling loudly enough to wake all but the heaviest sleepers; a thin trail of sapphire embers shoots up and point in the direction of the intruder, dancing around to indicate each in turn if there are several.

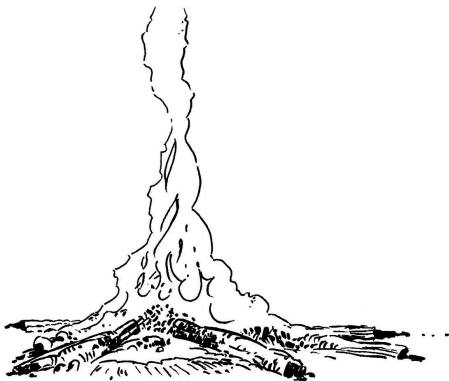


While useful, this is not the full extent of the spell's power; should any approach to within 5m bearing hostile intent then a turbulent tendril of blue fire will arc up from the flames and strike them, inflicting 1 point of damage and continuing to do so, striking one target per Combat Round for up to five occasions.

As with Comforting Hearth, Watchful Fire can be cast at 1st, 2nd or 3rd levels with the same provisos.

### **Constant Campfire**

Level	1
Casting range	1m
Effective range	3m
Casting time	15 minutes
Duration	12 hours



A simple but immensely welcome enchantment, this spell will feed a campfire from a nearby stock of fuel. The fire will continue to burn unattended while logs and sticks dutifully disappear from the stock. It will not, however, gather fuel, and the fire will go out once supplies are exhausted.

### **Cauldron of Plenty**

Level	2
Casting range	1m
Casting time	5 minutes
Duration	12 hours



Cast upon a suitable cauldron or other receptacle boiling over the fire, this spell will create a hearty broth from ingredients placed within; simply add a suitable amount of clean water, some meat, grain or vegetables (prepared or not) and within an hour a well-seasoned and nourishing meal will be

prepared, and will continue to merrily seethe unattended providing a warm meal for up to twelve hours (or until all the contents of the pot are eaten – whichever comes first). If an actual cook is present, their knowledge will improve the food still further without them having to prepare it, but for most it is enough to tip a skinned hare and a handful of turnips pulled from a field into a pot and leave it to do its thing.

Cauldron of Plenty can also be combined with the Sorcerer's *Banquet* spell to create a far more appetising result.

### **Camp Familiar**

Level	2
Casting range	1m
Casting time	15 minutes
Duration	12 hours



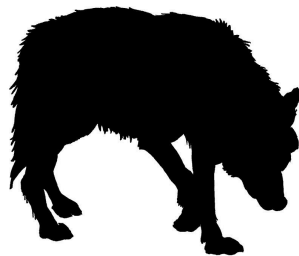
This spell summons a small unseen fairy creature to clean and mend equipment overnight, and requires an offering of goodwill - typically a saucer of fresh milk, a small glass of wine, anything domestic that is offered with a good heart. Items requiring attention should be left covered (the Familiar will cease work and disappear if spotted), and if the campers can ignore the occasional small movement and occasional quiet sounds of industry then their gear will be found in good order the following morning. Some caution should be taken with the Camp Familiar; while the creature is perfectly happy to see to considerable quantities (a full backpack's worth), expecting it to deal with mounds of dirty clothing, cooking gear, and sundries may annoy it enough to depart in a huff and not return for a full month, but not before scattering the offending items around the vicinity.

The spell should also not be cast if there is nothing to repair; in such circumstances, the creature may get rather inventive, for example sewing

sleeping rolls shut with their occupants inside, or leading horses off for reshoeing that do not reappear for days. Lastly, the Camp Familiar should never be summoned where there are infants present for fear that they may be stolen.

### **Wolf Companion**

Level	2
Casting range	n/a
Casting time	5 minutes
Duration	Dawn to dusk, or dusk until dawn



Wolf Companion is an augmentation to the Sorcerer's *Wolfcall* spell (and is therefore of no use to other professions), and causes the wolf ally to remain by the caster's side, providing a staunch defender, companion, tracker, and hunter.

The caster must first cast *Wolfcall*, and wait until the animal has arrived. It will then take five rounds to cast *Wolf Companion*, during which spell expiry rolls for *Wolfcall* must be made (it is entirely possible therefore for the *Wolfcall* to end before the second spell can be completed). If successful, the wolf remains until the following dusk or dawn, or until the caster enters combat.

If the caster enters combat, the *Wolf Companion* spell ends and the original *Wolfcall* spell comes into effect; once the Spell Expiry for this has occurred the wolf will wander off.

It should be noted that the animal is a wild wolf, not a pet dog. It will react poorly to being fussed, petted or asked to perform tricks and the Gamesmaster is encouraged to play this out.

# ALYNYA

*Chris Jolliffe*

Known by no other name than Alynnya – an antiquated Krarthian term for hoard guardians – these sorcerous beings were created to defend treasure houses from the more capable and well-prepared thieves. Their size is directly related to the amount of wealth they defend, ranging from mansized to giantish proportions, but in form they are glistening metallic snakes with four arms, two bearing shields and two bearing short-hafted halberds, and their heads have three serpentine faces. Their tails are half-buried in the hoard, as if connected, and indeed they can draw recuperative powers from it; when wounded they will recover their strength while around them gold and silver tarnish and gems lose their lustre. Once defeated, it falls apart to become part of the treasure hoard used to create it.

Alynnya are notoriously difficult to deal with, being able to simultaneously handle multiple attackers. One particularly off-putting feature relates to magicians; an Alynnya struck by a spell (whether successful or not) can cast the same spell back next turn as its action, with no apparent need for Magic Points or psychic check rolls. This is, thankfully, the only magic that the creature can perform.

Alynnya, rank-equivalent: 8th

ATTACK 20	Short halberd (d8, 5), 2 attacks
DEFENCE 16*	Armour Factor 4 and shields**
MAGICAL ATTACK 20	STEALTH 12
MAGICAL DEFENCE 16	PERCEPTION 12 (Panoptical)
EVASION 4	
Health Points 20	

\* The Alynya can defend against two attackers without needing to split its DEFENCE; more attackers than this are faced with a combined DEFENCE of 32, of which no more than 16 can be put against a single attacker.

\*\* Due to its two shields, the Alynya has a 1-in-4 chance of blocking melee attacks

The Alynya can heal by devaluing the treasure immediately around it, at the rate of 4 Health Points per 500 florins. It will only do this three times for fear of ruining the hoard.



The statistics given for the Alynya above are for a creature guarding a Good hoard.

**Bountiful**      Add 2 to ATTACK, DEFENCE, MAGICAL ATTACK and DEFENCE, and Rank; AR 5 and Health Points 25. Damage (d10, 6). Increase hoard healing to 5 points per 1000 Florins, three times.

**Grand**      Add 4 to ATTACK, DEFENCE, MAGICAL ATTACK and DEFENCE, and Rank; AR 6 and Health Points 30. Damage (d12, 7) Increase hoard healing to 6 points per 1500 Florins, three times.

**Fabulous**      Add 6 to ATTACK, DEFENCE, MAGICAL ATTACK and DEFENCE, and Rank; AR to 7 and Health Points 40. Damage (2d6 +2, 8). Increase hoard healing to 8 points per 2000 Florins, FOUR times.

# DARKNESS AND VISION

*Lee Barklam*

Dragon Warriors has two rules that need a little massaging to bring together: one for fighting in darkness (-4 ATTACK and -8 DEFENCE, see p. 61 of the main rulebook) and one for different vision types' effects on PERCEPTION (see p. 123 of the main rulebook).

What is not clear from the rules is the effect on ATTACK and DEFENCE in different lighting conditions for different vision types, upon which this article intends to shed some light (pun intended).

## No Light

	ATTACK	DEFENCE	PERCEPTION
Normal	-4	-8	-7
Panoptical	0	0	0
Darksight	0	0	+5
Elfsight	-2	-4	-4
Gloomsight	-1	-2	-3

## Half Light

	ATTACK	DEFENCE	PERCEPTION
Normal	-1	-2	0
Panoptical	0	0	0
Darksight	-1	-2	0
Elfsight	0	0	0
Gloomsight	0	0	0

## Bright Light

	ATTACK	DEFENCE	PERCEPTION
Normal	0	0	+5
Panoptical	0	0	0
Darksight	-4	-2	-7
Elfsight	0	0	0
Gloomsight	-2	-4	-5

## Half-Light

Examples of half-light conditions are not given in the main rulebook but would consist of deep twilight, full moonlight, torchlight or lamplight in an otherwise lightless underworld, or equivalent. Darker forms of half-light – such as starlight on a moonless night or the light from a lone candle in an abbey’s cellar – might impose greater darkness penalties to those with normal vision, and the referee is encouraged to consider a spectrum of modifiers that do not simply jump in discrete steps between the three lighting categories.

So why the ATTACK and DEFENCE penalties in half-light? Are these conditions not exactly those in which characters are most likely to find themselves fighting for their lives? In such light, shadows can play tricks on the eye and with less light, fast movements may also confuse and be hard to read, so whilst this penalty may seem punitive to characters with normal vision delving into dark underworlds, note that the darksighted creatures they are likely to encounter down there are similarly penalised if the characters have brought light sources with them. These modifiers also increase the value of elfsight in such places, such as that granted by the mystic’s *Darksight* spell.

# OUT OF THE MAGICIAN'S SHADOW

*Lee Barklam*

The original edition of Dragon Warriors was published as a series of paperback books: the second book in the series introduced sorcerers and mystics and the fourth introduced STEALTH and PERCEPTION. This means that those early magicians' spells were not drafted with consideration for these later rules, nor were the spell descriptions updated with the revised printing of the Dragon Warriors rules. In this article, I will look at some spells with an eye to the STEALTH and PERCEPTION rules on which those early spells missed out.

## Sorcerer Spells

*Moonglow* (Sorcerer 1) – If the optional rules for ATTACK and DEFENCE modifiers for half-light are in use (see pages 22 to 23 above), the use of Moonglow at full brightness would remove those penalties for characters with normal vision – Moonglow casts a ubiquitous even light, unlike the flickering flames of torches and lamps that cast long frenetic and distracting shadows in the heat of battle (or even the shadows cast by natural moonlight).

*Detect Aura* (Sorcerer 2) – Enchanted beings and objects are considered to be in 'bright light' whilst this spell is in effect (i.e., +5 PERCEPTION to detect hidden items or beings) – or the equivalent preferred lighting condition for the character using this spell for characters that don't have the normal vision type.

*Armour* (Sorcerer 6) – The jet-black nature of the armour increases the character's STEALTH in half-light by +2.



*Invisibility* (Sorcerer 9) – Increases STEALTH by +7 points (not cumulative with any darkness penalties to PERCEPTION).

## Mystic Spells

*See Enchantment* (Mystic 1) – As per the sorcerer spell *Detect Aura*.

*Darksight* (Mystic 2) – Grants all the vision type bonuses and penalties for elfsight.

*Dazzle* (Mystic 2) – Dazzled targets that see with darksight are stunned for 1 round, as per the assassin's shock attack (ATTACK, DEFENCE, and EVASION are all 0).

*Clairvoyance* (Mystic 4) – Confers the panoptical vision type with a range of 5m. Outside that range, the mystic's vision type is unaffected.



# A CART FILLED WITH TREASURE

*Mark Dowson*

This quick solo adventure is suitable for a Rank 3-4 character.

1. Having successfully raided the tomb of King Tharn Walf in the foothills of the Pagan Mountains, you have filled a small cart with about 5,000F of treasure – enough to afford a small house in Brymstone, your next stop. But being out in the wilderness, getting this cart filled with treasure there presents a challenge in itself. You have a choice of two routes to take; either through the forest or skirting its northeastern edge. To take the track through the forest, read 7. To take the track between the edge of the forest and Lake Glassan, read 13.

2. With the light through the trees beginning to fade, a short distance off the track you stop for the night and lay down to sleep in the back of the cart. Roll 2d10 and add your PERCEPTION. If the result is 22 or more, read 18. On a result of 21 or less, read 8.

3. With one final swing of his sword the knight decapitates you.

## The End

4. The dwarf you are fighting smashes you over the head with his cudgel and you fall to the ground, dead.

## The End



5. “Thank you,” he smiles, as you give him the fifty gold crowns. “Glad you are so reasonable.” As you drive the cart away, you hear him chortling with another guard over what a soft touch you are. Deduct 500 florins from the value of your treasure and read **20**.

6. “Thought as much,” the knight sneers and rides off. Read **10**.

7. Entering the greenness of the forest with the trees on all sides of you, you and the pony pulling your cart spend half a day travelling before being faced with a decision of whether to sleep during the night or during the day. If you sleep at night, read **2**. If you sleep during the day, read **15**.

8. Unfortunately, you do not wake, as thieves murder you in your sleep for your treasure.

**The End**



9. The knight falls dead into the dirt, and you add his money and valuables, amounting to 1,000 florins, to your treasure. Read **10**.

10. The following day you reach the local town and drive up to the main gate through the wall surrounding the place.

“That is a very big cart,” says one of the town guards who stops you there, exaggerating slightly. “How about in the interest of cultivating goodwill, you make a donation to my retirement funds; say fifty gold.”

If you wish to oblige him with this, read **5**. If you refuse, read **17**.

11. The last of the wretched dwarf thieves falls dead to the ground. They have a dozen florins on them. The rest of the night is quiet and uneventful. Read **10**.

**12.** “No doubt stolen,” the knight scoffs. “Now that treasure is mine; all of it!”

“I don’t think so,” you growl. Read **16**.

**13.** Proceeding along this route, you find your surroundings are dominated by the green of the trees to your left and the mirky stillness of the lake to your right with a mist in that direction. Late into the day, you hear ahead of you the hooves of a horse against the track. Read **14**.

**14.** Into view rides what you judge to be a knight by his armour and opulent cloak. On reaching you, he brings his horse to a stop and demands “What is in the cart, peasant?” You get the impression he thinks of anyone as a peasant who he considers a lower social class than himself. To tell him that you are a great adventurer and that the cart is full of gold, read **19**. To tell him it is just hay, read **6**. To tell him it is none of his business, read **16**.

**15.** With shafts of sunlight still breaking through the tree branches above, a short distance off the track you bring your horse to a stop and clambering into the back of the cart behind you, lay down to sleep. Ignoring the buzz of insects, you are soon in the world of dreams.

The hooves of an approaching horse wake you sometime later. Read **14**.

**16.** “You’re not really worth dulling my blade with,” the knight growls, “But you’ve asked for it.” Leaping from his horse, he draws his sword.

ATTACK 15 Sword (d8, 4); DEFENCE 9; Armour Factor 5;  
MAGICAL DEFENCE 5; EVASION 4; Health Points 15; Rank 3

If you defeat him, read **9**. If you are defeated, read **3**.

**17.** “Being miserly is your right but very unfriendly. In the interest of doing my job, I must check the occasional cart and I think I better do yours. “Oh,

someone's been busy," he says on seeing all the gold and helps himself to a couple of handfuls."

"Hey, that's mine!" you object.

"What are you talking about," grins the guard, "I've not taken anything. Go on your way, unless you wish me to spend longer inspecting your cart." Clearly, this inspecting would involve him helping himself to more of your treasure. Reduce the value of your treasure by 150 florins and read **20**.

**18.** You are woken by the sound of boots against the ground and see the silhouettes of two diminutive, bearded figures approaching the cart. You have just enough time to draw your weapon as they reach you, and you see that they are dwarves.

ATTACK 11 Cudgel (d3, 3); DEFENCE 5; Armour Factor 1;  
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3; EVASION 3; Health Points 8; Rank 1

Fight them both at the same time. If you defeat them, read **11**. If you are defeated, read **4**.

**19.** "I don't believe you, you insolent wretch," the knight sneers. To agree that you were lying, read **6**. To show him some of the treasure, read **12**. To take offence and challenge him to a fight, read **16**.

**20.** As you drive your cart into Brymstone, you are greeted by the smells of food from the marketplace and the chime of metal against metal from a nearby forge, you think of all the good things you are going to be able to buy with your new wealth.

**The End**



# MARSH BEAST II: MORTAL COMBAT

*Andrew Wright*

Back in the eighth issue of *Casket of Fays*, we expanded upon the existence of the Marsh Beast, a creature named only in the *Swamps Encounter Table* of both the first and second editions of the *Dragon Warriors* role-playing game, but never explicitly supplied with a definitive *Bestiary* entry. Of course, if we had dug a little deeper, we may have uncovered a different story.

Hidden in the depths of *Mortal Combat*<sup>2</sup>, an early role-playing game written by Dave Morris and Steve Foster way back in 1979<sup>3</sup>, was the actual details of the Marsh Beast. Here it was! The type specimen as it were; discovered in the cyber-equivalent of a forgotten drawer in the dusty shelves of a lost backroom among the sprawling archives of an immense institutional museum, with not enough researchers, catalogers and taxonomists present to unearth such gems of elucidation and clarity.

Given that *Mortal Combat* was, via the unpublished *Adventure* role-playing game system, a clear ancestor of *Dragon Warriors*, and thus easy to convert to current rules<sup>4</sup>, we present the new (old) converted Marsh Beast, as originally (or not) intended to appear in the first book of *Dragon Warriors* when it was published in 1985.

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<sup>2</sup> Pages 41-42 of the original *Mortal Combat* RPG to be precise. It also appears on the *Swamp Encounter table* on page 43.

<sup>3</sup> For more information and access to a PDF of the *Mortal Combat* RPG, see the following entries on Dave Morris' current *Fabled Lands* blog:

<https://fabledlands.blogspot.com/2010/10/mortal-combat.html> and

<https://fabledlands.blogspot.com/2020/12/mortal-engines.html>

<sup>4</sup> Similar to the later *Golden Dragon* adventure gamebooks, the *Mortal Combat* RPG contains excellent examples of many near-identical synergies with its derived *Dragon Warriors* descendant, as well as many fascinating examples of paths not taken, perhaps providing plenty of fuel for further articles of this ilk. For instance, the *Voluceth* are also present (of course they are!) but initially named as the *Myhrdyne*.

# Marsh Beast

*“Produced by some sorcerer of a bygone age, these [shaggy, green-furred, vaguely humanoid] creatures dwell in swamps, stagnant pools or sometimes damp caverns. They attack [people] on sight, using their large claws as weapons. [Marsh Beasts] can imitate voices well, and sometimes use this ability to lure their victims into traps.”<sup>5</sup>*

ATTACK 18	Claws (d8, 6)
DEFENCE 10	Armour Factor 2
MAGICAL DEFENCE 4	STEALTH 14
EVASION 4	PERCEPTION 7 (Darksight)
Health Points 2d6 +16	Movement 10m (20m)
Rank Equivalent: 5th	
Category: monster; Number: 1; Habitat: swamps, underworlds;	
Typical Treasure: poor	



<sup>5</sup> Mortal Combat, pp. 41-42, edits in square brackets.

